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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, February 23, 1944

Subject: "NATIONAL FOOD SITUATION" Information from distribution officials, War Food Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Food is the fashionable topic of conversation this season...and we're all interested in knowing what we'll have to eat in the coming months. Let's look at the national food situation, and the prospects for good eating in 1944.

As you know, we Americans on the home front do not get all the food our farmers produce...we never did. And this year, demands on our food supply, instead of becoming less, are actually increasing. For in 1944, as in 1943, food is an important weapon. Our military needs for food will grow as the months pass. The lend-lease program...under which we send food to our allies...is expanding. Our armies have already found that food is one of the essential weapons in occupied countries... where people have been near starvation for months. And we have only limited amounts of food in storage. Even with increased production, direct war needs will press on our food supply.

All this means, we civilians will not be able to get unlimited amounts of certain foods, and supplies must be divided. How is our food divided...where does it go...and how much will we civilians actually get?

The official name for dividing up the food supply is "allocations". Think of the allocations as a sort of national food budget. We have to balance our food needs with our food supplies...much the way a homemaker balances her expenses and income. Our food is divided among the people who need it...our military forces, civilians, our allies, and other groups...in the way that'll do most good in winning the war. Representatives of the different groups meet together, with civilians represented by the Civilian Food Requirements Branch of the Office of Distribution. And the Civilian Food Requirements Branch applies for the civilian food share just as

military and lend-lease authorities apply for theirs.

The needs, or claims, of each group are compared with the supplies we expect to have. If the food budget doesn't balance, each representative studies his request again, and the War Food Administrator divides up the food on the basis of who needs it most. Of course the needs of our Armed Forces are taken care of first...then come us on the home front, and the other groups.

The food budget can be definite only for three months at a time...battle conditions and conditions of food production may change rapidly. Every three months we recount our supplies and claims...and balance the budget again if there are any changes. And with this budget method, each group gets its fair share.

Where is all the food going? Well, this year about thirteen and one-half percent of our total food supply will go to meet the needs of United States military and war services. That means, food for your boy and the neighbor's husband, whether they're stationed in this country or overseas. Food shipments to England, Russia, and the other United Nations under the lend-lease program will come to about eleven and one-half percent of our expected supplies. In other words, one-fourth of our food supplies are going to meet direct war needs.

What about civilians? We can't count on increases on our total food supply... and we may have to take some cuts. But we'll continue to have three-quarters of all the food produced in this country...and our share of food will keep us very well-fed. In most cases we'll have at least as much as we had in the years 1935 to 1939. That doesn't mean unlimited supplies of all kinds of food. But we will have plenty of nourishing food...and there'll be lots of variety.

Naturally we want to know what <u>kinds</u> of food we'll be eating this year. Well, there won't be many changes made. We'll have the some kinds of food we had in 1943...though perhaps more of one kind, less of another.

We can expect about as much meat as we've averaged since rationing began... that's about 132 pounds per person for the year, and is six pounds more than we averaged before the war. We can expect almost as much poultry as in 1943...and that's a good bit more than we ever used to eat. There'll be about as many eggs as last year...and right now they're an especially good buy. There'll be about

as much fish, counting in fresh, canned, and cured varieties. For the next few months we'll have more dried peas and beans than in the same months last year. And in 1943 we used more soya flour and grits in our homes...this year there'll be still more. And here's what that all adds up to: We'll have more than enough protein foods to meet our basic needs this year.

Don't expect any more butter than you've been able to buy in the past year... Supplies are definitely limited, and we may get a little less. But we'll have somewhat more margarine...more peanut butter...and more orange marmalade. Our supply of lard will be about the same as in 1943. We should have plenty of potatoes...and abundant grain products like bread, macaroni, and cereals. But that's not new: As you know, we've already begun eating more potatoes and more cereals. We're also hoping to have many more leafy green and yellow vegetables, tomatoes, and fruit this year. Right now, cabbage and citrus fruit are especially abundant.

As for dairy products...we won't be able to drink all the milk we'd like to drink, as demand for milk has increased faster than supply. Our share of cheese and of evaporated milk will continue at the same level as since rationing began.

In other words...we civilians are sure of enough of the right foods for good health this year...and we're also sure that the important war weapon, FOOD, will be used most effectively. For in 1944, as our armies continue the offensive, our food must be on the offensive, too.